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**Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of
the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly****Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the
United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security
Questions in Central Africa****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

During the reporting period, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa held two ministerial meetings. The forty-fifth meeting was held in Kigali from 4 to 8 December 2017, and the forty-sixth meeting was held in Brazzaville from 29 May to 1 June 2018. Both meetings were facilitated by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, in its capacity as secretariat of the Committee.

At the two meetings, the Committee reviewed the political and security situation in Central Africa and recommended actions to be taken to address the prevailing security challenges on the agenda of the Committee. During both meetings, the Committee examined the status of the signature and ratification of legal instruments on disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons in the subregion, in particular the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention) and the Arms Trade Treaty. While progress had been made since the forty-fourth meeting, the Committee urged those of its member States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to both instruments. The secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) informed the Committee that its action plan for the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention was in line with the African Union master road map, entitled "Silencing the Guns by 2020".

The Committee demonstrated increased attention to the women and peace and security agenda, in particular with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the participation of women in decision-making. At both meetings, the Committee urged its member States to increase the representation of

* A/73/150.



women in delegations attending the its biannual meetings, in accordance with the declaration adopted in Sao Tome at the forty-third meeting.

During its forty-fifth meeting, which saw renewed high-level participation, with 10 countries represented at the ministerial level, the Committee dedicated its first closed-door ministerial session to the situation in the Central African Republic and the reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The Committee adopted two declarations, one on each issue (see annexes I and II). It also adopted a communiqué prepared by representatives of youth organizations (see annex III) from ECCAS member countries. During its forty-sixth meeting, the Committee dedicated a ministerial closed-door session to discussing confidence measures in the subregion and adopted a declaration on the issue (see annex IV).

The Committee assessed the progress achieved in the adoption of the regional strategy and plan of action for combating terrorism and the trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. During the forty-fifth meeting, the ECCAS secretariat decided, for operational reasons, to remove issues related to small arms and light weapons from the strategy, which was subsequently endorsed at the ministerial meeting of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, held in Libreville in March 2018. However, at the forty-sixth meeting, the Committee recommended that the strategy be implemented in its original form, including issues relating to small arms and light weapons, as previously adopted at its forty-first meeting, held in Libreville in November 2015. It also recommended that the relevant peace and security organs of ECCAS finalize the endorsement of the strategy so as to enable the ECCAS secretariat to follow up on its implementation, which remains the responsibility of member States.

The threat posed by Boko Haram, and the measures being taken at both the subregional and regional levels to counter the terrorist group, in particular the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force and the long-planned joint summit of the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States, remained high on the agenda of the Committee. The Bureau of the Committee expressed its willingness to undertake a field visit to Boko Haram-affected areas before its forty-seventh meeting.

The forty-seventh meeting is scheduled to be held in N'Djamena before the end of 2018.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/63, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa", the General Assembly welcomed the efforts of the Committee towards addressing cross-border security threats in Central Africa. The Assembly also reaffirmed its support for efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels to ease tensions and conflicts in Central Africa and to further sustainable peace, stability and development in the subregion.
2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction to the Secretary-General for his support to the Committee, expressed appreciation for the role played by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) in its capacity as the secretariat of the Committee, and strongly encouraged the States members of the Committee and its regional and international partners to support the work of the Office. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the assistance needed by the Committee to ensure the success of its regular biannual meetings. It also called upon him to submit to the General Assembly, at its seventy-third session, a report on the implementation of resolution 72/63.
3. The present report is submitted pursuant to the above request and covers the activities carried out by the Committee from September 2017 to August 2018.

II. Activities of the Committee

4. The forty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee was held in Kigali, from 4 to 8 December 2017, and the forty-sixth meeting was held in Brazzaville, from 29 May to 1 June 2018. Both meetings were attended by Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe. Burundi was unable to attend the forty-fifth meeting, but did attend the forty-sixth. The secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which plays an active role throughout the meetings alongside UNOCA, participated in both meetings.
5. Representatives of the following entities also participated as observers in one or both meetings: the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Multinational Joint Task Force, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. Representatives of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) attended both the forty-fifth and the forty-sixth meetings. During the forty-sixth meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, at the initiative of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, jointly briefed the Committee, for the first time, on their respective areas of responsibility and shared messages related to the implementation of their mandates. They also briefed the Committee on the main

conclusions of the sixth annual meeting of United Nations presences in Central Africa, held in Libreville on 26 and 27 April 2018.

6. The main issues on the agenda of the Committee and its activities during the period under review are set out below.

A. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

7. The Committee continued to serve as a forum for forging a shared understanding of the peace and security challenges in Central Africa and collective approaches for addressing them. In particular, the Committee examined relevant developments within each country, while also reviewing the main peace and security challenges across the subregion.

8. The Committee noted that its member States continued to face uncertain democratic and electoral processes, social tensions in the context of a heavy dependency on commodities and challenges posed by the global economy and impediments to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. Those challenges were compounded by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, transnational organized crime and the activities of mercenaries, and armed and terrorist groups at the regional level. The persistence of instability and conflicts across the subregion also had serious human rights and humanitarian consequences. In this regard, the Committee took note with concern of the security crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region, the Central African Republic and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of tensions between Burundi and Rwanda and in the Pool region of the Congo and the anglophone North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. During the forty-fifth meeting, some member States raised concerns about mounting distrust among Central African States due to the activities of mercenaries operating across borders and trying to undermine elected Governments.

9. The Committee dedicated a session of each of its two meetings to the regional dimension of the situation in the Central African Republic. The representatives of the Government of the Central African Republic, the ECCAS secretariat, the African Union Commission and MINUSCA made presentations on the various challenges to peace and security. The Committee urged its member States to provide political, technical and financial support for organizing, under the framework of the African Union-led African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, an inclusive national dialogue by the end of 2018. The representatives of the Central African Republic and its neighbouring countries, including Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, raised the issue of transhumance and its cross-border security implications. Pursuant to discussions held during its forty-fifth meeting, the Committee adopted a ministerial declaration (see annex I) in which it, *inter alia*, condemned the attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers; called for support for the African Initiative, including the activities of the panel of facilitators, while committing to the fight against impunity; and called upon member States to reinforce cross-border security cooperation mechanisms, including through the reactivation of mixed commissions.

B. Disarmament and arms control

1. Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly and Arms Trade Treaty

10. The Committee examined the status of the signature and ratification of legal instruments relating to disarmament and the non-proliferation of arms in the subregion, in particular the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention) (see A/65/517-S/2010/534, annex) and the Arms Trade Treaty (see General Assembly resolution 67/234 B). The ECCAS secretariat informed the Committee that its action plan towards implementation of the Convention was in line with the African Union master road map, entitled "Silencing the Guns by 2020". Six member States have created national commissions on small arms and light weapons, in line with the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa and the Kinshasa Convention. While progress had been made since the forty-fourth meeting, the Committee urged those of its member States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to both instruments. As at the time of reporting, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda have not ratified the Convention.

11. The first Conference of States Parties to the Kinshasa Convention was held in Yaoundé from 11 to 13 June 2018. Six States parties and four signatory States to the Convention participated in the work of the Conference. A Conference Bureau was established, consisting of Cameroon (President), the Congo (first Vice-President) and Gabon (second Vice-President) for a period of two years. A permanent secretariat for the Kinshasa Convention was established within the ECCAS secretariat and a dedicated trust fund for the implementation of the Convention was also established. Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic are now parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, while Angola, Burundi, the Congo, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe are signatories. The fourth Conference of States Parties to the Treaty is scheduled to be held in Tokyo from 20 to 24 August 2018.

2. Update on the activities of the Office for Disarmament Affairs

12. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which is part of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, continued to be an important partner of the Committee in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. During the two Committee meetings, representatives of the Centre gave briefings on relevant disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation activities in support of the States members of the Committee. The activities focused on technical assistance and capacity-building to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons through improved physical security and stockpile management, including of ammunition. In this regard, the Centre presented a capacity-building project to support member States in implementing the Kinshasa Convention.

C. Armed violence and terrorism in Central Africa

1. Issue of mercenaries in Central Africa

13. In the light of cross-border activities by armed groups in the subregion, the Committee, at its forty-sixth meeting, held a ministerial closed-door session devoted

to confidence-building measures. During the discussion, member States noted that the issue of mercenaries had become a major security concern, undermining trust and creating tensions among States members of ECCAS. In this regard, the representatives of Chad and Equatorial Guinea provided briefings on their positions and condemned the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea in December 2017. The representative of Chad stressed that his was the first country to visit Malabo after the attempted coup to express its solidarity. As noted in the ministerial declaration adopted as the main outcome of the closed-door session (see annex IV), the Committee condemned the attempt to destabilize Equatorial Guinea, underlined its support to the country, expressed concern about the movement of mercenaries across the region and announced the decision to strengthen regional cooperation to fight transnational crime.

2. Regional strategy and plan of action for combating terrorism and the trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa

14. In accordance with the recommendations made at its forty-fifth meeting, the Committee urged the relevant peace and security organs of ECCAS, notably the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, to finalize the endorsement of the regional strategy and plan of action for combating terrorism and the trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, adopted at its forty-first meeting, held in Libreville in November 2015, and enable the ECCAS secretariat to follow up on the implementation of the strategy, which remained the responsibility of member States.

3. Boko Haram

15. During the forty-fifth and forty-sixth meetings of the Committee, representatives of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Multinational Joint Task Force provided extensive briefings on the activities of Boko Haram and its affiliated groups and the measures taken to counter them. It was noted that the operations of the Task Force had weakened the ability of Boko Haram to hold territory and conduct large-scale attacks. At the same time, Boko Haram remained a serious regional threat and retained the capacity to carry out isolated attacks against military and civilian targets through suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices. The representative of the Commission highlighted the issue of returnees and those who were captured from Boko Haram, as well as the need for a coordinated and comprehensive response to tackle their disarmament, demobilization, deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration. The representatives of both the Commission and the Task Force stressed the need to design and implement non-military responses to complement the military engagement on the ground. The representative of the Task Force stressed the instrumental nature of cooperation with the local population, and the intelligence contributions from international partners. Coordination with civilian partners and confidence-building between the Task Force and local populations were deemed critical to the implementation of the Task Force mandate. The challenges and gaps that the Task Force continued to face regarding mobility, logistics and demining were also highlighted, as was the need for amphibious capacity and night-vision goggles. The representatives of both entities called for international support to reinforce their capacities.

16. The Committee highlighted humanitarian challenges facing Boko Haram-affected countries. During the forty-fifth meeting, representatives of Cameroon and Chad gave briefings on movements of persons at their borders, including the critical issues of refugees and internally displaced persons. They expressed concern about the vulnerabilities of local populations, including protection challenges, the collapse of community-based livelihoods and increased tensions between displaced populations

and host communities. Both Cameroon and Chad remained available to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian partners to implement measures to address the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region.

17. During the forty-fifth and forty-sixth meetings, representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs briefed the Committee on humanitarian challenges in Boko Haram-affected areas and emphasized that environmental challenges further compounded an already critical humanitarian situation as a result of Boko Haram activities in the Lake Chad Basin region. More than 2.4 million persons were internally displaced or refugees. Some 4.5 million people were affected by severe food insecurity; that number was expected to reach 5.8 million during the lean season from June to August. Over 500,000 children under the age of 5 were acutely malnourished. There was a significant increase in cases of sexual violence and abuse, as well as of the exploitation of children and other vulnerable people. Human rights violations were widespread and increasingly systematic, including the recruitment of boys and girls into armed and criminal groups. During 2018, a total of 10.7 million people were assessed as being in need of humanitarian assistance in the Lake Chad Basin region. The funding requirement for the humanitarian response was estimated at \$1.6 billion, of which only \$476.7 million had been mobilized. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to additional challenges, such as the protection of humanitarian actors and civil-military coordination.

18. The Committee welcomed the arrangements made by the ECCAS secretariat for the long-planned joint summit of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS and ECCAS on peace, security, stability and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, to be held on 30 July 2018, as requested by the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS in February 2015.

4. Lord's Resistance Army

19. The Committee expressed concern about the withdrawal of the Uganda People's Defence Forces, and of the United States Special Forces supporting them, from the African Union Regional Task Force combating the Lord's Resistance Army in the eastern part of the Central African Republic and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Committee noted that the withdrawals had created a security vacuum exploited by the Lord's Resistance Army and other armed groups. While significantly diminished, the Lord's Resistance Army retained the capacity to harm civilians in remote areas in both countries.

D. Poaching and transnational organized crime

20. The Committee reviewed developments regarding poaching and transnational organized crime, including in relation to illegal trade in wildlife and trafficking in drugs and persons. The Committee encouraged the relevant peace and security organs of ECCAS to support the operationalization of the strategies for the fight against poaching.

E. Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

21. During its forty-fifth and forty-sixth meetings, the Committee discussed progress made in the operationalization of the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa. Representatives of the Interregional Coordination Centre provided extensive briefings on its activities and the measures

taken to counter maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea. The Committee was informed that the operationalization of its centres in Zone G (Cabo Verde) and Zone A (Angola) was under way. The Committee was also informed that the Interregional Coordination Centre had received technical support from the United Nations, including through the provision of an expert on reform issues by UNODC and a resource mobilization expert by UNOCA. The representative called for the implementation of a number of measures, including the adoption of regional regulations relating to maritime piracy; the provision of ship detection systems equipment that meets international standards to the member States concerned; the provision of operating funds for the Interregional Coordination Centre and its operational structures, including the Regional Centre; the strengthening of cooperation between the judicial services and the operational bodies of the Interregional Coordination Centre; and the implementation of national strategies on maritime safety and security.

22. The Committee also called for the operationalization of all relevant strategies on maritime security and the revision of the Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa, adopted in Yaoundé in 2013. The representative of the Interregional Coordination Centre called for technical and financial support to set up coordination cells at the national level.

F. Implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in Central Africa

23. During the reporting period, the Committee increased its focus on the women and peace and security agenda, in particular in relation to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the participation of women in decision-making processes.

24. During the forty-fifth and forty-sixth meetings, a representative of the ECCAS secretariat briefed the Committee on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in Central Africa and noted progress made towards gender mainstreaming at the national level, while highlighting continued challenges related to gender-based violence and sexual violence in conflict areas. The challenge of involving women in early warning mechanisms, mediation processes, governance and decision-making processes was also pointed out as priorities in Central Africa.

25. The Committee urged its member States to increase the representation of women in delegations attending the biannual meetings of the Committee, in accordance with the Sao Tome declaration on the participation of women in the statutory meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (A/72/363, annex II). The Committee also made recommendations to: (a) set up an observatory on gender-based violence in Central Africa; (b) undertake a study on women's role in preventing violent extremism; (c) establish a joint specialized technical group to monitor the implementation of the ECCAS action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); (d) increase the number of women within the national defence and security forces and United Nations peacekeeping operations; and (e) launch the "HeforShe" campaign in Central Africa.

G. Cooperation with international and regional organizations, with the support of United Nations entities

26. Through their active participation and contributions, the ECCAS secretariat, the African Union Commission, ECOWAS and various United Nations entities, including MINUSCA, MONUSCO, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs,

the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, UNODC, UNOWAS and UN-Women, continued to provide invaluable assistance to the efforts of the Committee to address peace and security challenges in Central Africa.

27. A representative of the ECCAS secretariat informed the Committee about the progress made in the institutional reform of the ECCAS peace and security architecture, launched at the sixteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in N'Djamena in May 2015. It was noted that the reforms remained a priority, as reaffirmed at the ministerial meeting of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, held in Libreville in March 2018. In cooperation with member States, a consultant was working on harmonizing the fundamental texts of ECCAS, reorganizing the institutional framework and developing an implementation plan. The final report was expected to be endorsed at the next Assembly of ECCAS Heads of State and Government.

H. Revitalization of the Committee

28. Pursuant to the recommendations on the revitalization of the work of the Committee adopted at its forty-fourth meeting in Yaoundé, the forty-fifth and forty-sixth meetings of the Committee implemented a new meeting format, with a more dynamic agenda attuned to peace and security developments and closed-door ministerial sessions on specific topics of interest. At the forty-fifth meeting, the situation in the Central African Republic and the reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa were discussed during the closed-door ministerial session, while confidence-building measures in Central Africa were discussed at the forty-sixth meeting. Thematic briefings by representatives of member States were also provided on a voluntary basis. During the forty-fifth meeting, the representative of Rwanda briefed the Committee on the free movement of people and goods, while the representatives of Cameroon and Chad provided an update on their efforts to address the needs of internally displaced persons and refugees in their respective countries. During the forty-sixth meeting, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo made a presentation on electoral processes and the representative of Sao Tome and Principe reported on the country's experience with the democratic transfer of power.

29. The new format also enabled the Committee to host side events in partnership with civil society groups. At the forty-fifth meeting, youth representatives from ECCAS member States attended a side event and prepared a communiqué (see annex III), adopted by the Committee, calling for effective youth engagement in conflict prevention and resolution in Central Africa.

30. Pursuant to a request by States members of the Committee to develop a communication strategy for the Committee to enhance the visibility of its work, UNOCA presented such a strategy during a meeting of the Bureau of the Committee and the secretariat of ECCAS in September 2017. The strategy is focused on the involvement of relevant ECCAS organs and country focal points in all Committee-related activities, while also involving the media to publicize the Committee's activities. The strategy will be implemented in cooperation with the ECCAS secretariat and the respective host country of each Committee meeting.

III. Administrative and financial matters

31. The Committee recalled the Declaration on the trust fund of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa of 2009 (Libreville Declaration) (see A/64/85-S/2009/288, annex), adopted at its twenty-eighth ministerial meeting, and reviewed the financial status of the trust fund. It should be recalled that, during its forty-second meeting, the Committee adopted the Declaration on a binding annual contribution from States members of the Committee (Bangui Declaration) (A/71/293, annex V), introducing a binding annual contribution of \$10,000 per year per member State and calling on the Heads of State and Government of member States to issue a decision to that effect. The Committee called on member States that had not yet done so to fulfil their financial commitments, in keeping with the spirit of the Libreville and the Bangui Declarations. At each of the two meetings, a representative of the Committee secretariat presented the balance of the contributions to date per country to member States of the Committee. As at 29 May 2018, the balance of the trust fund stood at \$149,016.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

32. The Secretary-General welcomes the Committee's continuing efforts to consolidate peace and security in Central Africa in collaboration with subregional organizations, in particular ECCAS, and with the African Union, the United Nations system and other international partners. He is also encouraged by the renewed commitment of member States to the work of the Committee and welcomes the increased ministerial participation in its statutory meetings.

33. The Secretary-General commends Cameroon and Chad for their active engagement in the fight against Boko Haram, notably in the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force, but remains concerned by the devastating socioeconomic, humanitarian, human rights and security impact of Boko Haram activities on the affected regions and populations. The recent spate of attacks in Cameroon and Nigeria, including through the increased use of young women and girls as suicide bombers, and mass abductions targeting education facilities, is a stark reminder that Boko Haram remains a threat and can only be defeated through a holistic approach that includes socioeconomic development, good governance and the protection of human rights. In this regard, the Secretary-General calls upon all Member States to conduct counter-insurgency operations in strict compliance with international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. He also remains committed to continuing to mobilize international support for the States and communities of the Lake Chad Basin region in their efforts to confront the threat posed by Boko Haram and recover from its scourge, including through managing the increasing flow of surrendering and defecting fighters and their dependents, while taking into account the specific needs of women and children. The Secretary-General welcomes the plans of ECCAS and ECOWAS to hold a joint summit of Heads of State and Government on peace, security, stability and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in July 2018. He encourages States members of the Committee to continue to support the regional efforts led by States members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and remains committed to mobilizing increased international support for this endeavour.

34. The Secretary-General calls upon States members of the Committee to take full ownership of the regional strategy and plan of action for combating terrorism and the trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa by finalizing its endorsement promptly through the ECCAS peace and security organs and ensuring its final adoption at the next Assembly of ECCAS Heads of States and Government.

The United Nations stands ready to continue to support the ECCAS secretariat in the implementation of the strategy, including through UNOCA.

35. The Secretary-General welcomes the first Conference of States Parties to the Kinshasa Convention, held in Yaoundé from 11 to 13 June 2018, as an important step forward in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the spread of armed violence in Central Africa. The Convention, together with other African subregional instruments on small arms, creates a mutually reinforcing disarmament and arms control network across the continent and contributes to the implementation of aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union. He calls upon the States members of the Committee that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention and to establish their national commissions on small arms and light weapons, as stipulated therein. He also calls upon member States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Arms Trade Treaty.

36. The Secretary-General is concerned about continued violence perpetrated by armed groups in the Central African Republic. He welcomes the ongoing African Union-led African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and the activities of its panel of facilitators, which are aimed at finding a durable solution to the protracted crisis facing the country. He calls on all stakeholders to work together closely to that end. In this regard, his Special Representative for Central Africa, in close collaboration with his Special Representative for the Central African Republic, will continue to advocate for support to be provided by the subregion for the stabilization and recovery of the Central African Republic, as reiterated in the declaration adopted in Kigali (annex I).

37. The Secretary-General is also concerned about the security vacuum resulting from the withdrawal of the forces deployed to combat the Lord's Resistance Army in the eastern part of the Central African Republic. He encourages the States concerned to adjust existing arrangements to ensure that the Lord's Resistance Army does not exploit that vacuum.

38. The Secretary-General welcomes the progressive operationalization of the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea and encourages States members of the Committee, ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to remain committed to fully implementing the recommendations adopted at the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea. He reiterates his call to all Member States and partners to provide the resources necessary to ensure the full and sustainable operationalization of the Interregional Coordination Centre and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa. In this regard, UNOCA, in collaboration with UNOWAS, will continue to assist organizations in both subregions.

39. The Secretary-General remains concerned about the continuing reports of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and their links to the financing of armed groups in Central Africa. He commends member States of the Committee for the measures taken to counter the problem and encourages them to take active steps to implement the Libreville Declaration on combating poaching in Central Africa (A/71/293, annex IV), calling for greater synergies and cooperation on the issue.

40. The Secretary-General welcomes the adoption of the Kigali Declaration on the reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (annex II). He believes that implementation of the measures adopted will be very helpful in further increasing the relevance and effectiveness of the Committee. In particular, he encourages the Committee and ECCAS to strengthen their cooperation and enhance synergies to promote confidence-building measures in the subregion as supported in the declaration adopted in Brazzaville (annex IV).

41. The Secretary-General encourages States members of the Committee to redouble their efforts to implement the declaration adopted in Sao Tome at the forty-third meeting, which includes a call for increased participation of women in the delegations of member States. He also encourages member States to continue to involve young people in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, as requested by youth representatives in the communiqué adopted in Kigali (annex III).

42. The Committee urgently needs additional funding to continue its work. The Secretary-General therefore urges all States members of the Committee to fulfil their financial commitments, in line with the Libreville Declaration of 2009, highlighting the need for them to contribute regularly to the Committee trust fund, so that the Committee may continue to carry out its activities and serve as an essential confidence-building mechanism among the States in the subregion.

43. The Secretary-General is grateful for the support provided by the Department of Political Affairs, UNOCA and his Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, François Louncény Fall, to ensure the functioning of the Committee. He also thanks MINUSCA, MONUSCO, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, UNODC, UNOWAS and UN-Women, for their participation in the meetings of the Committee. He looks forward to the conclusions of the Committee emanating from its forty-seventh and forty-eighth meetings, to be held in Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively.

Annex I

[Original: French]

Kigali declaration on the situation in the Central African Republic

We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Kigali on the occasion of the forty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Recalling the Bangui Declaration on the Central African Republic adopted at the forty-second meeting of the Committee on 10 June 2016 and the Yaoundé Declaration adopted at the forty-fourth meeting of the Committee on 2 June 2017,

Recalling the many long-standing efforts and resolutions of the executive bodies of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States aimed at resolving the political and security crisis in the Central African Republic,

Guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and by a subregional vision grounded in solidarity among States members and respect for human rights,

Reaffirming our strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic, and recalling the importance of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a member State,

Seriously concerned about the fragile security situation in the Central African Republic caused by the continued presence of armed and criminal groups, some of which have links to such activities as poaching and transhumance,

Deeply concerned that the illicit trafficking, trade and exploitation of natural resources, including gold, diamonds and wild flora and fauna, are having a negative impact on the economies and development of all States in the subregion and continue to threaten peace and stability by financing criminal activities,

Reiterating our concern about activities linked to transnational crime in the subregion, which is at risk of becoming a breeding ground for mercenaries fomenting instability and violent extremism in the Central African Republic,

Disturbed by the severity of the crisis in the Central African Republic, and expressing our strong political determination to implement our joint decisions through bilateral and regional mechanisms in order to support and assist the Central African Republic in the areas of national reconciliation, security sector reform and post-conflict recovery,

Reiterating our firm resolve to support the efforts of the legitimate authorities of the Central African Republic, in particular those of President Faustin Touadera,

Thanking the countries of the subregion for their active engagement in the pursuit of sustainable peace in the Central African Republic,

Welcoming the strengthening of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic in accordance with Security Council resolution 2387 (2017) of 15 November 2017, and reiterating the importance of the Mission expanding its efforts to protect civilians, in particular in the east of the Central African Republic, in the context of the withdrawal of the United States and Ugandan forces combating the Lord's Resistance Army,

Taking note of the communiqué on the Central African Republic adopted on 21 November 2017 at the 737th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union,

1. *Strongly condemn* the acts of violence and violations of human rights, which target in particular women, children and other vulnerable persons;
2. *Strongly condemn also* the attacks by armed groups against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, humanitarian workers and the national defence and security forces;
3. *Reiterate* our support for the implementation of the road map of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and for the efforts of the Panel of Facilitators established in the context of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic;
4. *Encourage* the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States, in particular those on the Panel, to provide financial contributions to the budget for implementing the Initiative and to take measures to deny access to their territories to members of armed groups operating in the Central African Republic;
5. *Decide* to combat impunity more effectively by strengthening judicial and penitentiary cooperation and harmonizing the rules on prosecution between States and victim compensation;
6. *Request* States members to make the necessary efforts to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition and exercise greater control over arms traffickers, and to unite their efforts to manage transhumance corridors that can facilitate the circulation of the small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which are sources of insecurity in the subregion, and *call for* the organization of a regional conference on transhumance under the auspices of the Economic Community of Central African States;
7. *Invite* the international community to strengthen the application of restrictions on the trade in natural resources from conflict zones, including through the Kimberley Process, and *decide* to expand our efforts to put an end to the illicit trafficking in natural resources that is financing criminal activities in our countries;
8. *Decide also* to strengthen border security cooperation among the countries neighbouring the Central African Republic, including through the strengthening of tripartite arrangements, in order to combat organized crime;
9. *Recommend* that States members of the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and the international community as a whole, make a greater effort to have the Security Council ease the arms embargo in order to enable the equipping and rearmament of the Central African Armed Forces, and *encourage* the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic to continue to support the restoration of State authority throughout the national territory of the Central African Republic;
10. *Encourage* States members to train military instructors and units through bilateral agreements, with a view to strengthening the capacities of the Central African Armed Forces, and also *call for* the establishment of a training centre in the Central African Republic with training delivered by trainers from States members of the Economic Community of Central African States;
11. *Reiterate*, at the request of the authorities of the Central African Republic, that it is important for countries in the region to strengthen State capacities by making

available civilian, police and military personnel to support the Central African administration in the delivery of basic public services;

12. *Encourage* the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2018–2019, to serve as the voice of the Economic Community of Central African States on the Council in relation to priority issues concerning the Central African Republic and the subregion, in close collaboration with the other African non-permanent members of the Security Council;

13. *Decide* to remain seized of the situation in the Central African Republic.

DONE at Kigali on 8 December 2017

Annex II

[Original: French]

Kigali declaration on the reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa

We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Kigali on the occasion of the forty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Guided by the principles enshrined in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations promoting the pacific settlement of local disputes through regional arrangements or agencies,

Recalling the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the 2008 memorandum of understanding on relations between the African Union and the regional economic communities on peace and security matters,

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States and the Protocol establishing the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa,

Recalling the final communiqué of the third meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville, and the final communiqué of the fourteenth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States, held in Kinshasa in 2009, concerning the revision of the instruments of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa,

Recalling also the final communiqué of the sixteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States, adopted in N'Djamena on 25 May 2015, concerning the institutional reform of the Economic Community of Central African States,

Taking note of the terms of reference for the institutional and organizational reform of the Economic Community of Central African States and the recommendations made at the workshop on the reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa held in Yaoundé in June 2016,

Recognizing that it is important for the international community to benefit from the expertise and field experience of the Economic Community of Central African States in order to address the new challenges in the subregion, and highlighting that such expertise and experience underpin the cardinal role of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa in the peace and security machinery of the Central African subregion,

Stressing that it is important for the Council for Peace and Security to obtain the resources it needs in order to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in the subregion,

1. *Affirm that the Committee fully supports the ongoing process of reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which is an integral part of the global institutional reform of the Economic Community of Central African States and is in line with the African Peace and Security Architecture;*

2. *Urge the States members of the Committee and the international community to provide technical and financial support to accelerate the reform of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa;*

3. *Decide to remain seized of the matter and assess the progress made at the forty-sixth meeting of the Committee, in Brazzaville.*

DONE at Kigali on 8 December 2017

Annex III

[Original: French]

Communiqué of the youth of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States

We, the youth of the Panafrikan Youth Network for the Culture of Peace and the national youth councils of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States, gathered in Kigali on the occasion of the forty-fifth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Recalling United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), in which it is stated that "youth should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation, and that a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity",

Taking into consideration the African Youth Charter, in particular its article 17, which recognizes the important role of youth in promoting peace and non-violence,

Congratulating the Governments of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States, the General Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Organization of la Francophonie for their efforts to promote greater youth engagement in conflict prevention and early warning in Central Africa,

- 1. Call on all youth in Central Africa to engage actively in the promotion and strengthening of the culture of peace;*
- 2. Urge the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States to support participatory development and the implementation of national strategies by the relevant institutions, civil society and youth, at the local and national levels, to combat all forms of discrimination, including discrimination experienced by young migrants and the diaspora;*
- 3. Affirm our commitment to supporting the promotion of an operational strategy to empower youth and enable them to contribute to development and integration in the Central African subregion, with the support of the Economic Community of Central African States, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Organization of la Francophonie;*
- 4. Respectfully request the high-level authorities of the Economic Community of Central African States to take ownership of and support the implementation of the project "Youth capacity-building in managing associations, participating in the conflict and violence prevention system and contributing to the early warning system for peace and security in Central Africa".*

DONE at Kigali on 8 December 2017

Annex IV

[Original: French]

Brazzaville declaration on confidence-building measures

We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered in Brazzaville on the occasion of the forty-sixth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and by a subregional vision grounded in solidarity among States members and respect for human rights,

*Drawing on the principles of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance concerning, *inter alia*, unconstitutional changes of Governments, which are one of the root causes of insecurity, instability and violent conflict in Africa,*

Recalling the many long-standing efforts and resolutions of the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States aimed at resolving political and security crises in the subregion,

Reaffirming our strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and recalling the importance of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a member State,

Seriously concerned about the security situation that has arisen in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea as a result of the attempted destabilization of the country by mercenaries,

Deeply concerned that uncontrolled movement of illegal groups among the States of the subregion is having a negative impact on confidence among the States of the subregion and continues to threaten peace and stability,

Reiterating our concern about transnational threats that risk creating a breeding ground for mercenaries fomenting instability and violent extremism in the subregion,

Disturbed by the circumstances surrounding the attempted coup d'état in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and expressing our strong political determination to implement our joint decisions through bilateral and regional security and border cooperation mechanisms,

Reiterating our firm resolve to support the efforts of the legitimate authorities of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, in particular those of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo,

Thanking the countries of the subregion for their active engagement in maintaining stability in Central Africa,

Welcoming the efforts of the countries of the subregion in the area of border security cooperation,

Noting that Alpha Condé, former Chairperson of the African Union, has condemned the attempt to destabilize Equatorial Guinea, and that several Heads of State have expressed support and solidarity,

1. *Strongly condemn also the attempt to destabilize Equatorial Guinea;*
2. *Reiterate our support for and solidarity with our sister republic, Equatorial Guinea;*

3. *Encourage* States members of the Economic Community of Central African States to collaborate and make the necessary efforts to eliminate the risk of mercenaries infiltrating their countries;

4. *Call on* the international community to condemn without reservation the attempted destabilization of an independent and sovereign State, and to support the States of the subregion in their efforts to combat cross-border crime;

5. *Decide* to strengthen border security cooperation among the countries of the subregion in order to combat organized crime, including through the strengthening of cooperation.

DONE at Brazzaville on 1 June 2018
